



City of Irving City Manager's Report

January 9, 2008

Strategic Goal No. 2: Vibrant Neighborhoods

Demolition of Substandard Property – The Building and Standards Commission ordered the demolition of a single-family property with detached garage and apartment, located at 2615 Roger Williams Road, after it was found to be substandard and dangerous. The property owner failed to complete the demolition and the city was authorized to proceed. Asbestos abatement began Dec. 27, with the demolition to follow later this month.

Strategic Goal No. 3: Economic Development

Irving Business Institute – The Irving Business Institute is starting another Entrepreneurial Essentials class beginning Jan. 28. The public is invited to attend a free preview session called Myths of Entrepreneurship at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 14 at the Irving Central Library. The session will explore what it takes to start a business. To learn more, call (972) 742-2393.

Job Fair – The Irving Public Library's Job Center will host a job fair from 1 to 4 p.m. Jan. 17 in the Central Library Auditorium. Recruiters from local companies will meet with job-seekers to discuss employment openings, collect résumés and schedule interviews. To learn more, call (972) 721-2608.

Research in Motion (RIM) Selects Irving for U.S. Headquarters – RIM, the maker of BlackBerry, announced its selection of Irving for its U.S. headquarters. Present for the announcement were State Senator Florence Shapiro, State Representative Linda Harper-Brown, Secretary of State Phil Wilson, Dallas County Judge Jim Foster, Irving Mayor Herbert Gears, Irving-Las Colinas Chamber Chairwoman Peggy Masters, representatives from the Greater Dallas Chamber and Jim Balsillie, co-CEO of RIM. The company is expected to employ more than 1,000 people in the region over the next several years. Its operations will include research and development, technical support, business operations and administration. RIM will initially occupy more than 100,000 square feet in a 10-year lease. Balsillie said, "With its talented workforce and strong infrastructure, Irving is an excellent location for RIM and we're very excited to be investing here." *The Dallas Morning News* has named the landing of the new U.S. headquarters of RIM as the "Biggest Economic Coup" of 2007.

Omega Environmental Technologies Relocating to Irving – Thanks in part to an incentive package approved by the City Council, Irving residents Grace and Thom Davis announced that they will be relocating Omega Environmental Technologies, a worldwide distributor of automobile aftermarket air conditioning parts, to Irving. Omega is in final lease negotiations for a 100,000-square-foot facility in the South Irving submarket. Omega was named the 2007 Small Business Exporter of the Year by the Export/Import Bank of the United States.

SanMar Development Coming to Irving – With the approval of zoning changes and an incentive agreement by the City Council, SanMar Corp., a national distributor of name-brand sportswear, will break ground early this year on its new 680,000-square-foot regional distribution facility in Irving. The center will be located at the northwest corner of State Highway 161, Northgate Drive and Valley View Lane. Upon completion of the facility, approximately 150 jobs will be located to Irving. Serving as project developer is ProLogis Inc., the world's largest owner, manager and developer of distribution facilities in 105 markets across North America, Asia and Europe.

Book of Lists Celebration Returning to Irving – The *Dallas Business Journal's* 2008 Book of Lists Celebration will return to Las Colinas on Jan. 17 at La Cima Club. The Irving Economic Development Partnership is a platinum sponsor of the event, which is expected to bring approximately 500 executives from the Metroplex's top companies to Irving. The Irving-Las Colinas Marketing Center will be featured as executives arrive for the event.

State of the City Dinner – Mayor Herbert Gears will discuss Irving's 2007 accomplishments and plans for the future at the annual State of the City dinner Jan. 29 at the Dallas Marriott at Las Colinas. This year's event also will feature the many development projects currently under construction or planned throughout the city. Sponsorship information and tickets may be obtained by contacting the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce at (214) 217-8484.

North Texas Chapter of the International Code Council – Irving will serve as the host city for the North Texas Chapter of the International Code Council's annual banquet, during which Planning and Development's Field Operations Manager Lawrence Crow will be installed as president of this regional organization. The event will be held Jan. 26 at Lindero Ranch.

Groups in Irving – The Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau welcomed the following groups to Irving: U.S. Marine Corps Recruiting Command (Dec. 14-15); Dallas Cowboys Football Club (Dec. 15-16); American Saisatsang Kenras (Dec. 22-25); Cotton Bowl Athletic Association/AT&T Cotton Bowl Classic Media (Dec. 25-Jan. 3); National Cheerleaders Dance Alliance (Dec. 27-29); Golden Master Mindset (Jan. 2-6); Flowtronex (Jan. 7-13); and Invisible Fence (Jan. 9-14).

Irving Houses Cotton Bowl Media – For the 18th consecutive year, the Irving Convention and Visitors Bureau hosted sports media in town Dec. 25-Jan. 3 to cover the Cotton Bowl. The bureau provided staffing, reporter notebooks and Irving visitor information for the Cotton Bowl Media Center, headquartered at the Omni Mandalay Hotel. In addition, the bureau partnered with the Omni Mandalay to provide media staying at the hotel a New Year's Eve welcome amenity. Most of the Cotton Bowl media coverage—both in print and broadcast—carried the Irving dateline.

ICON Development – Planning and Development has received a transit-oriented zoning case application from ICON Development for a 10-acre site at the southeast corner of Lake Carolyn Parkway and O'Connor Boulevard. The applicant proposes a two-phase project including two 12-story office towers, two 26-story residential towers, and a 250-room hotel. The site is immediately adjacent to the light rail station that will be built south of O'Connor Boulevard. The case is expected to be presented to the City Council in March or April.

Strategic Goal No. 4: Safe and Secure City

Digital In-Car Video System – The Police Department will begin a 30-day pilot program on Jan. 21 to test a new digital in-car video system that was approved by the City Council. This system, used to record all police traffic stops and pursuits, will replace the outdated VHS recorders currently in use. It is anticipated that all vehicles will be converted to the new digital system by the end of March.

Apartment Disorder Operation – Police Department staff conducted an operation in December aimed at reducing disorder in and around apartment complexes in South and Central Irving. Officers visited eight different locations and made 17 arrests for a variety of misdemeanor offenses.

Memorials Refurbished – Members of the Irving Citizens Police Academy Alumni Association and several Police Department employees volunteered their time and talents in December to refurbish the off-site memorials for fallen officers Glenn Homs and Aubrey Hawkins.

New Fire Equipment – The Fire Department received new hot sticks, a tool that allows firefighters to determine if a power line or electrical circuit is energized before they touch the line. One of these sticks has been placed on each engine and each truck to provide greater safety for firefighters.

New Firefighters – Four new candidates have completed testing and have been offered positions as firefighters. The new members of the Fire Department will begin work on Jan. 14. Three of the firefighter recruits will attend basic firefighting training at Collin County Community College. One recruit is already certified and will begin working at a fire station soon.

Goal No. 5: Diversity

Storytelling Around the World – The Northwest Library, 2928 N. Belt Line Road, will present Storytelling Around the World at 2 p.m. Jan. 19. The program is free and features African stories with Cathy Whiteman and Len Barnett. Storytelling Around the World is a program series designed to bring tales from different cultures to Irving. It is made possible by a grant from Texas Reads, a program administered by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission to promote reading and literacy within local communities.

Strategic Goal No. 6: Effective Communications

CINE Award for ICTN Video – The “Irving, Texas – Local Address, Global Access” high-definition video produced by Irving Community Television Network (ICTN), in partnership with the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce, has been selected as a winner of a CINE Golden Eagle Award. The CINE Golden Eagle awards, distinguishing excellence in professional, independent and student works, are recognized internationally as symbols of the highest production standards in filmmaking and videography. Last fall, more than 300 judges viewed and evaluated hundreds of entries in the competition. The ICTN video won in the category “Business – Sales Promotion.” The video is available for public viewing on the city Web site, and also is part of the Irving-Las Colinas Marketing Center housed at the chamber offices.

Spanish Town Hall Meeting – A Town Hall Meeting in Spanish will be held at 7 p.m. Jan. 15 at Senter Park Recreation Center, 901 S. Senter Road. City staff will provide an update on key initiatives such as public safety, code enforcement, neighborhood improvements and corridor enhancements. Attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions following the presentation. The meeting will be conducted in Spanish, and is open to the public. Printed information packets about city services and events also will be provided to residents at the meeting.

School Involvement – The City of Irving was represented by five city employees at the MacArthur High School Career Day in November. Mike Evitts (Fire), Dave Springob (Public Works/Engineering), John Barsic (Public Works/Engineering), Jeanene Heilman (Planning and Development) and Christine Hadley (Planning and Development) interacted with 650 students and answered questions on their respective careers with the city. During the month of December, the Fire Department made 24 presentations to a total of 116 children on the Fire Safety House.

Citizen Inquiries – For the months of October through December, the Corporate Communications Department responded to 558 inquiries. A total of 149 inquiries were responded to through the inquiry system, 261 Web-based inquiries were answered directly without departmental assistance, and 148 inquiries were immediately addressed. The primary concerns consisted of loose and barking dogs, outside storage, trash/debris and building code violations. Residents who initiate concerns are provided regular updates about how and when the issue is being addressed.

Web Site Updates – Information Technology has updated the city Web site with several new features. In order to help residents better navigate, a site map has been added at the bottom of each page, and additional services have been added to the “Online Services” drop down menu. Another feature is a Contact List link under the Government drop down menu. The Contact List page has been modified to include department directors and their e-mail addresses.

Abitibi Bowater's Material Recovery Facility – Solid Waste Services hosted a tour of Abitibi Bowater's material recovery facility (recycling facility) on Dec. 11 for local faith-based organizations participating in Irving's Interfaith Stewards project. The project is designed to educate faith-based organizations about various ways they can “green” their facilities, as well as help educate their congregants about environmental issues. December's featured topic was recycling. The group learned about ways to implement recycling, commonly recycled materials, Irving's recycling programs and how they are handled in preparation for re-manufacturing.

Strategic Goal No. 7: Cultural, Recreational and Educational Environments

New Sculptures at Irving Arts Center – The Irving Arts Center celebrates the arrival of two sculptures by American artist Reuben Nakian during a free reception on Jan. 13. The featured sculptures are on long-term loan from the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington, D.C. as part of the Arts Center's affiliation with the Smithsonian Institution. The reception will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Main Gallery and will feature refreshments and a tour of the Arts Center's Sculpture Garden. The Arts Center also will host a Family Funday, corresponding with the reception, in Suite 200. Children are invited to create a sculpture of their own to take home and enjoy. Family Funday is free, and all supplies are provided. The Irving Arts Center is located at 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd.

Yoga for Kids – Irving Central Library, 801 W. Irving Blvd., is hosting a yoga program designed for children at 2 p.m. Jan. 19. J'Ann Alvarado, children's librarian and yoga instructor, will lead the children through various yoga positions while telling stories, singing songs, stretching and teaching the benefits of yoga. Comfortable clothing is encouraged. Parents are urged to participate. Children under age 8 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

Martin Luther King Jr. Observance – The City of Irving will host its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Observance on Jan. 21 at the Irving Arts Center, Carpenter Performance Hall, 3333 N. MacArthur Blvd. Pre-entertainment begins at 6:45 p.m., and the production begins at 7 p.m. Performing artists will include vocalist Brenda Ellis and a gospel concert featuring the Jubilee Theatre of Fort Worth. This year marks the 40th memorial anniversary for Martin Luther King Jr., and this event will be a riveting revival geared to honor Dr. King's legacy of peace and justice for all mankind. A post-event reception will be hosted by the Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber of Commerce. Admission is free, and no reservations are required. For more information, call (972) 721-2501.

KidsNotes – The Irving Public Library is collaborating with the Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra on KidsNotes, a program offering children the opportunity to hear, see, touch and explore different aspects of classical music and the orchestra. It will provide information about the orchestra and give children a hands-on activity with an Instrument Petting Zoo. KidsNotes also includes a storytime, games and activities designed to help kids relate to the symphony orchestra experience. The program takes place at 2:30 p.m. Jan. 22 at the Southwest Branch Library, 2216 W. Shady Grove Road.

Pool School – Parks and Recreation staff has developed a unique pool school to provide residents with the basic knowledge, techniques and skills for their pool and spa operations. Classes begin in mid-February, with additional classes to follow in April, September, October and December. The class in October will be offered in both English and Spanish. Classes are \$30 and are approximately 3 ½ hours in length. To register, call (972) 721-2501.

Irving Homeless Count and Survey – The Poverty and Homeless Coalition of Irving and the Irving Health Board will conduct a count of homeless persons who live in Irving from 6 to 10 p.m. Jan. 22. A requirement of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the count will help with the assessment of the needs of the homeless population currently living in shelters, transitional housing, or in places not meant for human habitation. This initiative involves a variety of Irving community volunteers and human service providers, including faith-based services, health and mental health service providers, and city departments (Housing and Human Services, Corporate Communications, Police and Fire).

Strategic Goal No. 8: Sound Governance

On-the-Spot Awards – City of Irving employees continue to be recognized for outstanding customer service and/or exceptional work beyond their normal job duties. Employees that recently received On-the-Spot Awards from City Manager Tommy Gonzalez are Richard Bracey (Police), Dave Evans (Public Works/Engineering), Linda Marlow (City Attorney's Office), Clark Nethers (Police) and John Orr (Police).

IT Employee Recognition – The Information Technology Department named Assistant Director John Mayer as the Manager of the Year, and Senior Programmer Analyst Robb Bailey as the Employee of the Year in December. The two were honored for their hard work and dedication to the department.

Customer Service Training – Information Technology will begin the 18-module Telephone Doctor customer service training offered through the city's Water Utilities Customer Service Division this year. Topics offered in this training, which is used to improve customer service and telephone skills, range from basic telephone service to how to handle irate callers, as well as the Essential Elements of Internal Customer Service. Service desk staff plans to have this training completed within one year.

Employee TGIF Training Event – Strategic Resources and Budget will host the January Great Irving Forum event "How to Build a Better You" on Jan. 11. The program will focus on creating a positive outlook, the laws of leadership and the power of personal energy. The speaker for this event will be Bryan Dodge, who has shared convention and seminar platforms with many of the nation's top motivational personalities such as Tom Hopkins, Lou Holtz, Terry Bradshaw, Brian Tracy, Og Mandino, Rodger Dawson and Roger Staubach.

Employee Food Collection – City employees collected more than 1,087 pounds of food and \$465 in cash for Irving Cares this holiday season. The 2007 drive was coordinated by Steve Booher, Juan Carlos Reynoso and Jan Bodnar.

Language Skills Testing – Strategic Resources and Budget facilitated an on-site language skills testing session in December. At year-end, a total of 8.88 percent of city employees were receiving language incentive pay.

May Municipal Elections – A candidate packet for the May 10 general municipal elections has been prepared and is available in the City Secretary's Office. Included in the packets are guidelines and required forms, plus a list of important election dates and deadlines. The election calendar also will be posted on the City Secretary's page on the city Web site.

Strategic Goal No. 9: Infrastructure Network

Cooling Tower Replacement – The cooling tower replacement project at the Irving Central Library has been completed. The old tower, which was rusted beyond repair, was removed. The new equipment is more energy efficient and is constructed of stainless steel, which will result in an increased life expectancy for the equipment. The new tower will provide both employees and residents a comfortable environment while at the library.

Strategic Goal No. 10: Environmentally Sustainable Community

Shredding Opportunity – Irving residents brought in more than 3,800 pounds of documents during the city's shredding event on Dec. 7. The next shredding opportunity will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 7 at the O'Connor Plaza Recycling Drop-Off Center (northwest corner of State Highway 183 and O'Connor Road). This opportunity provides for the safe destruction of personal documents. All shredded materials will be recycled.